



MassWildlife News

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

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HUNTERS, GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK!

Hunting and sporting license holders – is your email listed in the *MassFishHunt* electronic license system? If not, go online now and enter it if you want to participate in future hunter surveys from MassWildlife. By the time you read this, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, through Novi Systems, will have begun sending out an electronic hunter survey to all hunters who have included an email address in their *MassFishHunt* profile. Surveys are being sent out in batches through the end of March.

The survey is designed to understand hunter efforts and preferences and to collect important local “on-the-ground” information for managing game in the Commonwealth. Depending on the variety of game you hunt, the survey takes anywhere from 10-20 minutes to complete. The survey is set up so all responses remain anonymous. (Identifying information such as email and IP address are not recorded.)

Within the next few weeks, any sporting or hunting license holder with an email address in the *MassFishHunt* system should receive an email invitation from Novi Survey with a link to the survey. Be sure to check your spam or junk folder for any emails from Novi Survey in case it is flagged by your security system. The link you are provided is assigned to each email address, therefore you should not forward the invitation to others as the survey can only be filled out once. A reminder will be emailed to those license holders who have not responded within a week. In order to receive future surveys, log in to www.mass.gov/massfishhunt and provide your email address.

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MARCH CONFERENCES: BIRDERS MEETING, LAND TRUST CONFERENCE

March is the month to acquire new knowledge, skills, and connections related to habitat protection. Join MassWildlife at two conservation conferences this month.

Saturday, March 8 – MassWildlife at the MassAudubon’s Annual Birder’s Meeting, Bentley College, Waltham – This year’s theme is “Extinction is Forever: What Have We Learned?” with sessions focusing on the extinction phenomenon from a variety of perspectives. MassWildlife will be staffing a display focusing on the Heath Hen and showing rare film and photo images of these now-extinct birds. Co-hosted by Mass Audubon, the [Museum of Comparative Zoology](#), and the [Harvard Museum of Natural History](#). Registration and session information can be found at: <http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/birds-birding/birders-meeting>

Saturday, March 22 – MassWildlife at the Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference, Worcester – Convened by the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, this annual conference will take place at the Worcester Technical High School, 1 Skyline Drive from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. This year’s theme is “Healthy Land – Healthy Communities.” MassWildlife staff will present two session on “Funding for Woodland & Wildlife Stewardship,” and “The Value of Farms to Birds & the Value of Birds to Farms.” [Click here for registration information about the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and their 24th annual conference.](#)

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SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT RULES ON MESA REGULATIONS

On Tuesday, February 18, 2014, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) ruled that the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife’s long-standing regulations for mapping and regulating development in “Priority Habitat” of state listed species are a reasonable implementation of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). The SJC’s decision in this case, *Pepin v. DFW*, upheld an earlier Superior Court ruling that MESA authorized the agency to review projects in Priority Habitat and to limit or require mitigation for impacts that may threaten species’ survival.

MESA is designed to prevent extinction and promote recovery of animals and plants listed in the Commonwealth as endangered, threatened, or of special concern. In the lawsuit, William and Marlene Pepin challenged DFW’s delineation of their property in Hampden as Priority Habitat for the Eastern Box Turtle, and sought an order striking down all of DFW’s Priority Habitat regulations as beyond the agency’s authority under MESA.

By upholding the Priority Habitat regulations, the SJC recognized that the Legislature authorized DFW to do what it has done for the past 20 years—take reasonable steps to protect all rare species and to guard against “takes” that kill or injure rare animals and plants, or harm rare animals by disrupting nesting, breeding, feeding, and migration. The SJC affirmed that DFW’s Priority Habitat regulations “serve to implement the existing statutory provision prohibiting takes of State-listed species, which is critical to the operation of MESA as a whole” and are “designed to facilitate property development, albeit in an environmentally sensitive manner.” The SJC’s decision also upheld DFW’s delineation of the Pepins’ property as Priority Habitat.

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HELP WITH SPRING EAGLE COUNT IN EARLY APRIL

Eagle and other wildlife enthusiasts are asked to save April 4, 2014 to participate in the statewide Spring Bald Eagle Survey. This effort will include a concentrated survey of the major rivers, lakes, and reservoirs across the Commonwealth. Organized by MassWildlife, the survey will be conducted by agency staff and volunteers. Teams will be checking known eagle territories and exploring areas with potential eagle habitat to try to locate “new” eagle nests. If inclement weather prevents the survey on April 4, the backup date is April 11, 2014. Additionally, MassWildlife encourages anyone to submit eagle sightings throughout the spring by email to natural.heritage@state.ma.us or by postal service to “Eagle Survey,” MassWildlife, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, MA 01583.

This is the second annual Spring Bald Eagle Survey, replacing MassWildlife’s long-standing Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey. “Now that Bald Eagle numbers have greatly increased and have been removed from the Federal Endangered Species List, the need to monitor nationwide populations has been reduced,” said Andrew Vitz, MassWildlife’s State Ornithologist. “At the same time, the number of eagles has increased across the Commonwealth. The Spring Eagle Survey helps us more closely monitor eagle breeding, nesting, and distribution in Massachusetts.”

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WINTER BROODSTOCK SALMON STOCKING

Hard-water anglers across the state can take advantage of a February stocking of broodstock Atlantic Salmon. Each district received a limited number of broodstock salmon ranging in size from 3-11 pounds from the National Fish Hatchery in Nashua, NH. Historically, Massachusetts’ broodstock were supplied by retired fish from Atlantic salmon restoration projects on the Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and other state partners have ended these restoration projects making it likely that 2014 will be the last year for broodstock salmon stocking by MassWildlife.

2014 Broodstock Salmon Stocking Locations

Western District: Stockbridge Bowl, Stockbridge and Windsor Lake, Windsor

Connecticut Valley District: Lake Mattawa, Orange and Five Mile Pond, Springfield

Central District: Asnacomet (Comet) Pond, Hubbardston and Webster Lake, Webster

Northeast District: Lake Cochituate, Natick/Framingham, Baddacook Pond, Groton, Lake Saltonstall, Haverhill, and Horn Pond, Woburn

Southeast District: Long Pond, Plymouth

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REMEMBER ENDANGERED SPECIES ON YOUR STATE TAX FORM

Help protect Box Turtles, Peregrine Falcons and other endangered wildlife by supporting the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Fund when you file your state income tax this year. Since 1983

Massachusetts tax filers of Form 1 have had the option of donating to this effort through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund when filing their state income tax (Line 32a: "Endangered Wildlife Conservation"), and tens of thousands of people have done so over the years.

All contributions go directly into the Fund, an important portion of the annual operating budget of DFW's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), which conserves and protects endangered species and their habitats in Massachusetts. Over 20,000 tax filers support the program with over \$200,000 in critically-important donations each year. Won't you join them? With your contributions to the Fund, you directly help to study, protect, and restore endangered animals and plants and their habitats. Donations help restore populations and conserve and maintain habitat for many vulnerable kinds of wildlife, from raptors to reptiles.

Contribute directly to the Fund by writing a check payable to: "Comm. of Mass-NHESP Fund" and sending it to: NHESP, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, 01583.

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GET INVOLVED IN THE YOUNG ADULT TURKEY HUNT PROGRAM

Young adults ages 12-17 who have successfully completed Hunter Education are invited to participate in this annual program, which provides young hunters with an opportunity to:

- Learn how to properly handle and shoot a shotgun for turkey hunting;
- Participate in a field workshop that provides specialized training in turkey hunting and safety; and
- Hunt wild turkey under the guidance of a safe, experienced adult hunter serving as a mentor on a special day set aside just for young adults.

The Young Adult Turkey Hunt (YATH) is comprised of two parts, the pre-hunt turkey seminar, hosted by sportsmen's clubs across the state, and the hunt itself. This year's youth hunt will be April 26, 2014. If you are interested in participating please contact Astrid Huseby at astrid.huseby@state.ma.us or check out mass.gov/dfw/yath to find a club near you.

Important information for returning YATH participants:

1. Young turkey hunters who have successfully completed the YATH Program in a previous year who plan to hunt on April 26, 2014 must first apply to MassWildlife by completing the [Past Participant Application](#). The application must be postmarked by April 18, 2014. Applications may be mailed or dropped off at: "Youth Turkey Permit," MassWildlife FHQ, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, MA, 01583.
2. YATH Permits will NOT be mailed to youth hunters. After completion of the past participant application, all youths must obtain the Youth Turkey Hunt permit through the [MassFishHunt website](#).
3. All youths who harvest a turkey on the Youth Turkey Hunt date of April 26, must report their harvest either online on [MassFishHunt](#) or at a [traditional game check station](#) within 48 hours of harvest.

4. Youths 15-17 years old are reminded that in order to hunt turkeys on the Youth Hunt date, a hunting/sporting license, **and** a turkey permit with the Youth Turkey Completion Certificate listed are required. Youth hunters are also reminded that they cannot purchase a license by home computer; they can only purchase a hunting/sporting license at a walk-in license vendor.

For further information on the Youth Turkey Hunt, contact Astrid Huseby at (508) 389-6305 or email her at astrid.huseby@state.ma.us.

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BASS CLUBS: SUBMIT CREEL SHEETS ONLINE

It's now easier than ever for bass clubs to help MassWildlife fisheries biologists by submitting tournament creel sheets electronically on our website at mass.gov/dfw/creel. "We ask bass clubs to voluntarily submit a creel sheet following the tournaments they host on Massachusetts waters," said Rich Hartley, MassWildlife Fisheries Biologist. "By submitting these creel sheets, bass clubs are providing a valuable service and data that helps the Division track and maintain quality bass populations in the state's lakes and ponds." Hartley noted that currently, MassWildlife receives creel sheets for only about 30% of the bass tournaments held each year. He would like to see an increase in that percentage, especially on some of the smaller bodies of water where fisheries staff may not have an opportunity to conduct their own fish surveys. Bass clubs can help the Division with its data needs and continue to keep the program voluntary by submitting creel sheets for all future events. Visit mass.gov/dfw/creel to electronically fill out and submit a creel sheet or [click here to print a paper copy](#) to submit by postal mail. Contact Richard Hartley at (508) 389-6330 or richard.hartley@state.ma.us for more information.

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UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

March 13 – Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, West Boylston – The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, March 13, 2014, at the DFW Field Headquarters Office located at 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston from 1:30- 4:30 P.M. in Conference Room A. Click here for [Directions](#) or call MassWildlife at (508) 389-6360 for more information.

March 31 – Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, West Boylston – The March meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board will be held on Monday, March 31, 2014, at 12:00 noon, at the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife Field Headquarters, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston. Click here for [Directions](#) or call MassWildlife at (508) 389-6342 for more information.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 1-31 -- Junior Duck Stamp Art Exhibit, Worcester – A selection of the top entries from the 2013 Junior Duck Stamp Artwork will be on display at the Flagg Gallery at Notre Dame Academy, 425 Salisbury Street, Worcester. Contact Mary Zywar at (508) 757-6200 x 253 for more information on the Flagg Gallery exhibit. Learn more about the Junior Duck Stamp Art contest by visiting our [website](#) or by contacting the JDS coordinator, Pam Landry at (508) 389-6310 or by email at Pam.Landry@state.ma.us.


March 9 – Black Bears of Massachusetts, Belchertown -- Since the 1970s, the black bear population in Massachusetts has grown from about 100 to about 3,000 in 2005. Come learn about these fascinating animals with Ralph Taylor, Connecticut Valley District Manager for MassWildlife. This event located at the Quabbin Visitor's Center, which is handicapped accessible. The talk is from 2:00 – 3:00 P.M. and is open to the public.

March 12-16 – MassWildlife at the Boston Flower & Garden Show, Boston – Visit the MassWildlife display at this popular event located in the Seaport World Trade Center. Chat with MassWildlife staff about wildlife in your back yard, problems with wildlife, habitat and wildlife conservation programs, and more. [For more information including hours, parking, and exhibitors, visit the Flower Show website.](#)

March 12 – Bat-astrophe: The Unexpected and Sudden Decline of Massachusetts Bats, Hyannis – Dr. Tom French, Assistant Director of DFW for the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, will discuss White-Nose Syndrome, the fungal infection affecting bats in MA and throughout the Northeast. The talk is sponsored by the Cape Wildlife Center. This talk is part of the “Wildlife on Tap” Lecture Series held at Cape Cod Beer, 1336 Phinney's Lane, and runs from 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. An admission charge of \$10 includes popcorn, and other goodies (proceeds support Cape Cod Wildlife Center). All lectures are expected to sell out in advance – get tickets at www.capecodbeer.com or in person at Cape Cod Beer or at the Cape Cod Wildlife Center, 4011 Main St, Barnstable.

March 15-April 1 – Rusty Blackbird Blitz, Statewide – This spring, help MassWildlife collect information about the Rusty Blackbird, a bird species in serious decline. The [Rusty Blackbird Blitz](#) is a regional survey and all birders are encouraged to participate. [Click here for more information on collecting and reporting “Rusty” sightings.](#) For more information about the Blitz in Massachusetts, contact DFW State Ornithologist and Rusty Blackbird MA coordinator, Drew Vitz at (508) 389-6394 or at Andrew.Vitz@state.ma.us.

March 15 – Basic Fresh Water Fly Tying Course, Worcester – This course will be held at the Lower Forty Fly Shop in Worcester (134 Madison St., Worcester) from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. This is a beginner's fly tying course with the focus on simple trout fishing patterns. Todd Girard will be the lead instructor, and all materials and equipment will be provided. The course is **limited to six people and pre-registration is required.** Contact Jim Bender at (508) 752-4004.

March 22 – Growing Up WILD Professional Development Workshop, Sandwich – Pre-school educators are invited to this fun, hands-on, 6-hour workshop that focuses on early childhood education. The Growing Up WILD Activity Guide builds on a children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. The workshop takes place at the [Thornton Burgess Society](#), Green Briar Nature Center, 6 Discovery Hill Road, E. Sandwich from 9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. [Click here to for more information about this workshop](#) . Please contact Mary at mary.beers@thorntonburgess.org or (508) 888-6870 for registration details. The registration deadline is March 15, 2014.

March 29 – The Bobcat in Massachusetts, Dudley – DFW Wildlife Technician, Susan Ingalls, will discuss bobcat biology, behavior, natural history, and management efforts. Ms. Ingalls' talk is sponsored

by the Dudley Conservation Land Trust and will take place at the Black Tavern, 138 Center Road in Dudley, at 2:00 P.M.

View more events at mass.gov/dfw/calendar.

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